



Culinary Institute  
of America

THE CULINARY INSTITUTE OF AMERICA presents

# Global Plant-Forward Culinary Summit

April 16 - 18, 2024

The Culinary Institute of America at Copia  
Napa, CA



GLOBAL PLANT-FORWARD  
CULINARY SUMMIT



## INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

*Veg-centric. Optimal nutrition and planetary boundaries. Plant-forward. Vegetarian. Whole, plant-based. Climate-smart food choices. Plant-rich. Elevating pulses (legumes), nuts, and seeds. Protein flip. Meat as a condiment. Biodiversity and plant-centric cooking. Vegan. The Mediterranean Diet. Plant proteins. Seasonal, delicious, local, and environmentally-friendly. Animal and plant protein blends. World produce kitchen. Flexitarian. Less meat, better meat. Vegetable revolution. Farm to table. Plant-powered. Food-tech and the global protein shift. Eating green. Climatarian. Reducetarian. Millennial values. Animal welfare. Produce at the center of the plate. Veg revolution.*

Whatever you call it and however you frame it, plant forward is one of the most significant culinary mega-trends underway in America and in global foodservice. It is changing how chefs think about menus, flavor development, creativity, profitability, and their future customers. It is upending the hierarchy of valuation—whether tied to specific ingredients, menu pricing, or concepts of excellence and prestige. With its momentum virtually unaffected by the pandemic, the plant-forward juggernaut will transform our expectations of restaurants and away-from-home dining over the next decade.

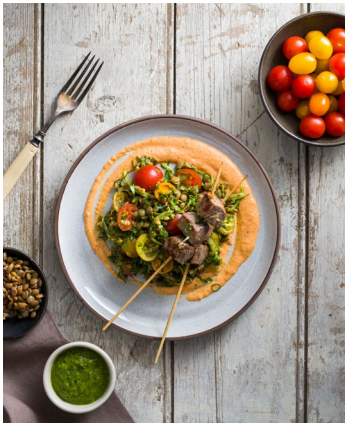
In some cases, the appeal of a plant-forward diet is a reflection of health or animal welfare concerns. In other cases, consumers are coming to understand that our world in 2050 cannot sustain a global population of 9-10 billion people with universal, meat-centered diets that exacerbate climate change and accelerate the depletion of fresh water, soils and forests, and other natural resources. And more and more chefs and their increasingly adventurous diners appreciate that the path to deliciousness can, but *need not*, lead through meat-based stocks, sauces, and center-of-the-plate entrees.

## PLANT-FORWARD DEFINED

**A style of cooking and eating that *emphasizes and celebrates*, but is not limited to, plant-based foods—including fruits and vegetables (produce); whole grains; beans, other legumes (pulses) and soy foods; nuts and seeds; plant oils; and herbs and spices—and that reflects evidence-based principles of health and sustainability.**

*Source: Menus of Change, a joint initiative of the CIA and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health—Department of Nutrition. For more information, please visit: [www.menusofchange.org](http://www.menusofchange.org).*

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Rather, inspiration can be seen from flavor-driven farms, chef-grower collaborations, plant-forward chefs and cooks in the United States—as well as from cuisines as diverse as those of the Mediterranean, Mexico and Peru, West Africa, East and South Asia, and the Nordic countries. They're bringing a growing awareness that vegetables, fruits, pulses (legumes), nuts, seeds, plant oils, herbs, flowers, and other plant-based aromatics are uniquely amazing products and, when combined with culinary expertise and creativity, can be craveable to even the most dedicated carnivores.

Supporting this shift, in an era that also sees many diners obsessing over their protein intake, are the insights from leading nutrition scientists and medical experts that plant protein—in an even moderately diverse, well-balanced, whole foods diet—is more than sufficient to advance human health and longevity.

Meat lovers have also come to realize that they can include “less meat, better meat” within a framework of healthy, sustainable food choices. Even a substantial shift away from animal protein towards plant protein can leave room for five or six ounces of red meat per week—which could be enjoyed in the form of “meat as a condiment,” two or three two-ounce portions, or a single small steak. Combined with a prioritization of fish and poultry over red meat, negative health and environmental impacts of red meat can be reduced further.



Slow-metabolizing diets that emphasize whole, plant-based foods and leverage small amounts of meat and other animal-based proteins together with plant-based product innovation and longstanding vegetarian and vegan traditions around the world point the way toward a big-tent strategy of “plant-forward.” Such a strategy can engage the maximum number of diners to successfully enhance and transform our collective diets and food systems. All while averting looming public health epidemics, future food security crises, and irreversible environmental impacts.

Chefs around the world are in a unique and pivotal position to help lead this transformation for several reasons:

- they have deep credibility around how to create deliciousness, and they drive contemporary food and flavor trends;
- they are in the best position to discover, hone, and share critical skills, and world cuisine-sourced techniques relating to plant-forward cooking with the public;
- in their restaurants, they have a powerful, direct platform for introducing and engaging diners in new or less familiar ingredients and dishes; and
- increasingly, they advise food growers, producers, manufacturers, retailers, public health leaders, and policy makers on how they can most strategically support this movement towards plant-forward food choices.

**Which is to say, much of this all comes down to: What's for dinner?**

## GLOBAL PLANT-FORWARD CULINARY SUMMIT

From April 16-18, 2024 **THE CULINARY INSTITUTE OF AMERICA** will stage the sixth annual **GLOBAL PLANT-FORWARD CULINARY SUMMIT**. Held at the CIA's Copia campus in Napa Valley, California, it will welcome chefs, foodservice operators, and experts in food, flavor development, cooking, agriculture and food production, media, and food system transformation from around the world.



The Global Plant-Forward Culinary Summit is inspired by the college's long-running Worlds of Flavor® International Conference & Festival as well as Menus of Change®, a joint initiative of the CIA and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Department of Nutrition. The summit will be wall-to-wall cooking, tastings, and culinary strategy discussion—all based on the evidence-based framework of optimal innovation embodied in the 24 Principles of Healthy, Sustainable Menus of the CIA-Harvard Chan School Menus of Change Initiative. It will also be underpinned by such related materials as the *Menus of Change Collection of Resources* and the Menus of Change Protein Flip.

The summit will feature innovative chefs and masters of traditional cuisines from the Mediterranean and Europe to Asia, Latin America, and Africa and from across the United States, plus sector experts from fast casual to university dining and healthcare. Featured chefs will include those whose work is highlighted in the **PLANT-FORWARD GLOBAL 50**, a joint initiative of the CIA and the EAT Foundation, summarized by *The Washington Post* with its headline, “The World’s 50 Best Places to Eat Your Vegetables.”

A strong focus on innovation will build on the CIA's targeted development and incubation of The Blend (blended meat-mushroom burgers) and more recent Pulses of Change initiative (elevating legumes as plant protein), and will ask: what other iconic, transformational menu items and menu categories are waiting to be developed and brought to market?

It will take many paths to get us to a health-promoting, environmentally sustainable food system for the planet in the coming years; accordingly, the summit will invite dialogues between chefs, tech innovators, and manufacturers as well. And we'll have a special focus on the produce industry, and how chefs can better collaborate with growers to add more produce-centric deliciousness to our tables.



Participating chefs and culinary experts on the operations side of our industry and other professionals will also have access to special hands-on, flavor discovery, and culinary insight sessions in CIA at Copia's new 9,000 square-foot Hestan Kitchen. The summit will utilize the whole of Napa-based CIA at Copia with its world-class culinary and other facilities, including the Copia gardens, live fire kitchens, and olive tree-shaded terraces overlooking the Napa River.



Please join us for a high-energy, high-flavor, immersive culinary odyssey and series of strategic dialogues at the intersection of sustainability, health, and the future of American and global menus in spring 2024 in the Napa Valley. Flavor hunters welcome!

*For more information please contact:*

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For more information and program updates,  
please visit our website at [plantforwardkitchen.org](http://plantforwardkitchen.org)